

# Pakefield School

London Road Pakefield, Pakefield, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 7AQ

## Inspection dates

25–26 April 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Standards have declined since the previous full inspection in 2013. Pupils do not make consistently good progress over time.
- Challenges to recruit teachers have hampered leaders' ability to bring about sustained improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Teachers are not using their knowledge of what pupils know and can do to match learning to pupils' abilities well enough. This includes the support provided for pupils to improve their writing skills.
- Leaders have not ensured that additional funding has had a precise enough impact on improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and lower-attaining pupils.
- It is too early to see the impact of the work of newly appointed leaders.
- A significant number of parents are concerned and frustrated about the school's provision. In particular, parents do not feel that all teachers deal with incidents of bullying consistently well, when they occur.
- Low-level disruptive behaviour acts as a barrier to learning and progress in some lessons. Some teachers do not consistently apply the school's behaviour policy to eliminate this behaviour.
- A small core of pupils' behaviour results in them having repeated exclusions from school. As a result, rates of exclusion are high.
- Attendance, although improving, is still below the national average, especially for some groups of pupils.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have increased the rigour of their checks on the quality of teaching and refined their improvement plans. As a result, leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Links with other schools and training and development opportunities provided by leaders have improved the accuracy of assessment.
- Pupils receive good-quality advice regarding options choices, careers and further education. A higher proportion than average move on to further education, employment or training.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils have opportunities to participate in a range of visits and extra-curricular activities that enhance their educational experiences.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - strengthening the use and evaluation of the additional funding that the school receives to ensure that it brings sustained improvements for disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and lower-attaining pupils
  - ensuring that newly appointed leaders are supported in evaluating their areas of responsibility
  - improving communication with parents to secure their full support for, and understanding of, what leaders and governors are trying to achieve.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good and enables pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, to make rapid progress by:
  - ensuring that all teachers use their knowledge of what pupils understand and can do to plan and provide learning opportunities that are well matched to pupils' abilities
  - ensuring that all teachers provide pupils with help to improve their work and support the development of pupils' writing skills.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
  - improving attendance for all pupils and particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities
  - ensuring that teachers consistently apply the school's behaviour and rewards policy to eliminate low-level disruption
  - improving the behaviour of the minority of pupils who struggle to self-regulate their behaviour so that this reduces the incidences that lead to fixed-term exclusions
  - working with pupils and parents so that they have confidence in all teachers' ability to deal with any concerns about bullying.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the previous full inspection, leaders and governors have not acted swiftly enough to ensure that teaching enables pupils to make consistently good progress and achieve well across all subjects and year groups.
- While leaders and governors are clear about their vision for the school and what they want to achieve, they have not gained the full support of parents. This is because senior leaders have not communicated clearly with parents regarding changes that they have made. The majority of parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, expressed negative views of the school. Leaders have recently introduced steps to improve communication with the school community, but these are at early stages of development.
- School leaders' evaluation of the use of additional funding, including the pupil premium, funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the Year 7 catch-up funding, has not been precise enough. This funding has not secured good progress or significantly improved attendance and behaviour for these pupils. While leaders' more recent actions are starting to improve the use of this funding, there are still occasions where they are not exploring precisely enough how their work could be more effective.
- Leaders have introduced a number of changes as a result of their accurate analysis of the school's priorities for improvement. The impact of these changes has been variable. In response, leaders have ensured that their improvement planning has more detailed ways of checking that actions are making a difference.
- Leaders acknowledge that the view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school has previously been overgenerous. They have worked effectively with the local authority to ensure that checks are more rigorous. As a result, leaders now have an accurate view of where, and how, teaching needs to improve. This has informed their plans for improvement and the support they provide to teachers.
- Leaders are taking steps to address underperformance and are providing targeted support based on teachers' development needs to secure improvements. Teachers are positive about this support. The very recently appointed leader for teaching, learning and assessment has correctly identified the priorities for further improvement, but it is too early to see the impact of this work.
- Several new leaders have taken on responsibilities for subject and pastoral roles. While they feel well supported and empowered to make changes, some are still in the process of developing their leadership skills and need further support to demonstrate the impact of their work.
- A whole-school focus on the most able pupils resulted in improved progress for this group in the 2017 examinations. Leaders also acted swiftly to address issues around the accuracy of assessment identified following the 2017 GCSE results and have developed links with other schools to improve this aspect of the school's work.
- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum to ensure that it provides pupils with the opportunity to experience a wide range of subjects. Pupils are able to choose subjects and qualifications that are well matched to their abilities and aspirations.

- A comprehensive programme, delivered through tutor periods and assemblies, contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is complemented by pupils' opportunities to participate in a variety of extra-curricular activities and visits. For example, pupils have opportunities to participate in dance and drama performances and a variety of sporting activities. During the inspection, a group of pupils in key stage 4 watched the live streaming of a performance of Macbeth by the Royal Shakespeare Company.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the challenges that it faces. They have used an external review of governance and a governance skills audit to ensure that they have the knowledge and expertise needed to be effective in their role.
- Governors play an active role in monitoring the work of the school. They have sharpened their focus on how well leaders use the pupil premium and additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Governors have provided increasing levels of challenge in order to hold senior leaders to account for all aspects of their work. They have ensured that leaders have used support from the local authority and links with other schools to improve teaching, learning and assessment.
- Governors understand and carry out their range of responsibilities diligently. They regularly review policies and ensure that statutory policies reflect the latest guidance.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors follow procedures for safer recruitment and carry out appropriate checks to ensure that adults are suitable to work with pupils. They maintain accurate records of these checks.
- Child protection procedures are clear and understood by staff. Staff receive appropriate training to keep pupils safe from harm, including from the risks of radicalisation and extremism.
- Staff know when to pass concerns to the safeguarding team. The designated safeguarding lead acts upon concerns swiftly and works appropriately with external agencies when necessary.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school varies across subjects and year groups, particularly where leaders have had difficulties recruiting staff. While there is clear evidence of effective teaching over time that helps some pupils to learn well, this is not a consistent picture.
- Teaching in the wider curriculum subjects does not take sufficient account of the precise starting points of pupils. Consequently, some pupils are routinely accessing work that is either too hard or too easy. Pupils are not being given opportunities to

make the sustained good progress of which they are capable, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

- The help that pupils receive to develop and apply their writing and communication skills in subjects other than English varies considerably. While some teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to use and develop their writing skills in different contexts, other pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to apply this knowledge over time.
- Some pupils are receiving a high-quality provision in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In particular, adults are supporting the specific needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They know the barriers to learning faced by these pupils and provide help that enables pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills. As a result, this group are making improved progress in these core subjects.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' previous learning to provide learning activities that are well matched to pupils' needs. Consequently, most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make good progress. However, leaders acknowledge that pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Leaders have improved the reliability and accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' progress over time through developing links with other schools and through additional training. This is ensuring that teachers have a more accurate view of the progress that different groups of pupils are making.
- Where teaching is more effective, teachers use their strong subject knowledge and understanding of assessment to plan sequences of learning activities that challenge pupils of different abilities. This supports pupils to make good progress over time. Pupils receive these experiences routinely in art, mathematics and key stage 4 design and technology.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils and parents say that bullying, when it occurs, is not dealt with consistently well. School leaders are attempting to reduce the incidents of bullying through a programme to promote kindness and tolerance, which takes place in form-tutor periods. The impact of this programme has yet to be evaluated and leaders acknowledge that they have more work to do to reduce bullying incidents.
- Most pupils spoken to by inspectors and those who responded to a pupil questionnaire feel safe in school. The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, agreed that their children feel safe at school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of e-safety and the risks of social media sites and working online. This awareness is developed through the form-tutor programme and assemblies.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- There is a small core of pupils who have not been well-supported to improve their behaviour. This is leading to a high number of fixed-term exclusions. Leaders are developing suitable programmes of support for pupils who are struggling to self-manage their behaviour. This work is showing early signs of making a real difference to these pupils' enthusiasm for learning.
- Leaders' actions are securing some improvements in attendance, although this is not yet rapid enough. Pupils' overall absence at the school is higher than the national average, including for groups of pupils, such as those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. It is too early to see the longer-term impact of leaders' more recent work to monitor and reward good attendance.
- Pupils and parents understandably are concerned about some poorer behaviour, especially where there has been a lack of consistent teaching or a reliance on temporary staffing. Leaders' actions are starting to bring about a decrease in poorer behaviour in lessons, and around the school. The large majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning; they arrive at lessons on time and properly equipped.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- In 2016 and 2017, pupils by the end of key stage 4 made less progress than other pupils did nationally. In particular, in 2017, pupils did not make the progress of which they were capable in English, science, modern foreign languages and humanities. However, standards in mathematics have been stronger, and pupils over the last two years have made consistently good progress in this subject.
- Leaders have not acted swiftly enough to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress across a range of subjects in all year groups. In 2017, leaders did not ensure that the additional funding they received had a precise focus on the academic needs of these pupils. Current pupils are beginning to make better progress because leaders are using funding more effectively. However, progress is not yet consistently good because of variations in the quality of teaching and the high absence rates of a core of pupils.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are now starting to make better progress. There is better identification of pupils' needs and more effective support in some lessons. This is less effective in subjects where pupils have had a number of changes in teaching staff. Leaders have provided training so that teachers and additional adults are increasingly skilled in asking questions that help these pupils to make progress and develop their understanding. Inspectors saw examples of this in design and technology and science in particular.
- Leaders are securing better standards for pupils who need support to catch up when they arrive in Year 7 without the basic skills that they need in English and mathematics. The majority of pupils improve their standards and make progress in reading and mathematics. However, leaders are not ensuring that these pupils continue to make good progress as they move throughout the school.

- The support provided for weaker readers has enabled most pupils to make progress. Year 7 pupils told inspectors how the school had helped them develop an enjoyment of reading by providing regular opportunities to read. Pupils in other year groups demonstrated that they had the skills needed to read and understand the texts that they were using.
- Following poorer outcomes for the most able pupils in 2016, leaders implemented a series of strategies to try to raise standards. Teachers had a greater focus on this group's achievement and raised their expectations of pupils through a school 'challenge project'. The most able pupils made much better progress in 2017. Teachers are continuing to use these methods and strategies to support the most able pupils currently in the school to make better progress.
- Arrangements for supporting pupils to move successfully to the next stage of education or employment are a strength of the school. Pupils receive impartial, good-quality advice and guidance on careers and options for further study. The proportion of pupils who are not in education, employment or training when they leave school is below the national average.

## School details

Unique reference number	136438
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10048267

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	890
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Monaghan
Headteacher	Anthony Walker
Telephone number	01502 530750
Website	<a href="http://www.pakefield.org.uk">www.pakefield.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@pakefield.org.uk">info@pakefield.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	14–15 March 2013 (section 5 inspection) 18 January 2018 (section 8 short inspection)

## Information about this school

- Pakefield School is a broadly average-sized secondary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is broadly average, though the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The current headteacher took up his post in September 2016. There have been a number of changes in leadership positions and in governance since this date.
- There was a short inspection of the school in January 2018. This determined that the school remained good but that the next inspection would be a full inspection.



- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress in a range of subjects by the end of Year 11.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in a range of subjects across all year groups. A number of these observations were carried out jointly with school leaders. Inspectors also scrutinised pupils' work, heard a small group of pupils read, observed an assembly and visited form periods.
- Meetings took place with senior leaders, members of the governing body, middle leaders and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed school records and information including that related to safeguarding, achievement, behaviour and attendance.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire. However, inspectors held formal discussions with groups of pupils from key stage 3 and key stage 4 to explore their experiences of school. They also gained pupils' views when visiting lessons and at informal times, such as break and lunchtimes. Inspectors also considered a survey issued by the school and completed by pupils during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at different points of the school day, both in and outside of lessons.
- Inspectors considered the 62 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. Inspectors also held discussions with teachers to gain their views on the work of the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 274 parental responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and considered the 57 free-text responses provided since the previous short inspection in January 2018. Inspectors also reviewed evidence provided by parents who spoke to them directly during the inspection, for example through telephone conversations.

## Inspection team

Paul Wilson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Diana Fletcher	Ofsted Inspector
John Wilson	Ofsted Inspector
Jenny Carpenter	Ofsted Inspector

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